

REASONS for the Bill with Four Views, and Commissioners to look after Wooll and Woollen Manufactures.

1. **T**HE Aulneger by several Statutes was to look not only to the length and breadth, but goodness of Cloth, too much for any one Man to oversee; yet having no Checks, he might easily pervert it. Also the Cloth-workers and Dyers view by 5 and 6. Ed. 6. c. 6. in Corporations, is disused, and thousands of Clothiers dwelling out of them; 'twas not so general a good if perform'd: because but the testimony of a particular Place, and those Officers being yearly changed, and having no Sallaries, did neglect it. Yet the reason of the mature Advice exprest in the said Act to have been then given by all the Merchants and Clothiers in England, still holds; that there must be some to take care of the true Manufacturing: and what's propounded in the Bill by a National View, will give Cloth all the Credit the publick Faith can afford. But if the Aulnage be put down for no reason but barely the abuse of it, and you do not at the same time come to some regulation which will in all likelihood effect the good ends for which the Aulnage was at first instituted; either all your Ancestors were in the dark, to think some care of the Manufactures necessary: or 'twill be as if one should take off the Shoe that pinches, and then go bare-foot, for fear of not getting an easier Pare. for 'twas not the number of Officers made the Aulnage un-ease, but the abusive manner of Collecting that Duty, rectify the abuse by putting it into Commission, which will not be lyable if you appoint good Sallaries and no Fees to be corrupted, a Constitution under so many Checks upon them, and in a Matter wherein the King and the Peoples Interest is in every point one and the same, and let but Cloth be strictly viewed in each of the Four Trades through whose hands it passes before finisht, and then like a Ship well lancht 'twill sail quickly and steadily through all the Channels of Trade, it should or might be brought to and with the best advantage. Though some parts of the Kingdom do by late regulations Export more then they did formerly: Yet no Man can say that the Clothing Trade is not very much decay'd in General, while it may be demonstrated six times as much Cloth went out of the Kingdom forty Years since as at any time this twenty Years; and how otherwise cou'd the price of Wool be now so much lower then anciently, when its also a plain case, more of it is now Exported Un-manufactur'd then ever. But the false Lights which the Merchants may give to those that cannot see into the Mystery of Trade, should not allow them to be Judges who are Parties in this Matter: Some getting Estates by ruining the Clothing Trade and advancing Foreign Manufactures: Others by those deceits which bring Cloth into dis-esteem so they can but do their business thereby, do not seek to advance their Fortunes with the Common Good of the Country; and those Merchants that do endeavour to send good Cloths abroad where the Credit of even their private Seals makes it sell fast, may not think it their Interest that all others should be obliged to deal so fairly, thus the cross Interest of Traders makes them incapable to conspire in any thing that's for the good of the Kingdom in general; which is the cause that upon the Ballance of Trade the Kingdom grows yearly the poorer: Though some of its Trading-Members are vastly enrich'd thereby.

Reasons for the Four Views in the Bill.

1. **O**UR Neighbour-Nations the French, &c. are getting yearly into the Clothing Trade, and will beat us out of it, unless we do rectify false making, and like them, view Cloth strictly. First, In the raw Thread before full'd to see it be well Spun, close Wove. 2d. To measure in the Water the length and breadth, that it be not after strain'd beyond what the Statutes allow, which prevents weakening and opening: Also that its well scowred from Greace and Oyl, or 'twill be apt to be Moth-eaten to see it well fulled, that Workmanship may be bestowed upon it. 3d. When rowed and shorn to see it rises thick and short, and is even shorn, which defends from Rain and makes it look and wear well. 4th. When Dyed, to view if the Colours be good as will not rot the Cloth or change the Colour. Unless Cloth of whatsoever sort or substance be carefully finisht in the four said Particulars, it will not be so perfect a Comodity as it ought to please and humour each Market. But if it were as this Bill proposes in its Proportion, 'twould be as pretious among all Nations as Gold, and bring the Indies home to us in Returns.

2. The Viewers will ease the Clothier, who puts forth all his Work, saving him labour and time, and by the second view out of the Mill the Clothier is at a certainty what length he shall be paid; for whereas now he is at none.

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5. Three of these Views have anciently been used as the Water-length, &c. by the Aulneger 25 Ed. 3. c. 1. The Cloth-workers and Dyers View by 5 and 6. Ed. 6. c. 6. The View in the raw Thread, tho most material has not been practis'd but in some particular places; as Colchester by 12. Ch. 2. Which has gain'd a vast Trade for their Bayse, for this is the main View; for unless any Woollen Manufacture be well woven, all the rest of the Workmanship to be bestowed will not render them perfectly good.

6. These Views add no dearness to the Cloth, because so small a Duty laid upon the four Views, being divided among four different Trades, lyes only upon the under-workers and not upon the Cloth it self, but what some propose upon putting down the Aulnage to lay the Duty thereof at the Custom-house upon Cloth just at Exportation, added to the 22d. which is already impos'd by Trading Companies, upon it must render it dearer at Foreign Markets. When so trivial a Matter paid by the four Workers can be no oppression to them, but will be their advantage by causing six times as much Work to pass through their hands as formerly, and when the Clause of ascertaining their VVages to be paid in Money, puts them out of danger of being wrong'd by those that set them to VVork, and likewise secures their Employers, that they take care in working, which will breed Emulation who shall gain the Credit of the best VVork-man, who will consequently be most employed.

7. These Viewers will have so many Checks upon them, and be under such Penalties in this Bill, that they'll hardly venture to loose a certain good Sallary for an uncertain unjust profit, not like to pass unpunisht, for they are to be such as are knowing in what they view; so that many others qualified will watch their Actions.

Reasons for Commissioners.

1. **V**VHY not Commissioners for Wooll and Woollen Manufactures as well as Commissioners of the Customs? this is of greater Import, being to enrich the Nation. They'll see the Laws for the benefit of the Clothing Trade be duely executed, Experience shews without a spring of Execution, Laws will soon dye. Colchester which is already under such a Regulation has gain'd a great Trade for Baile; and that's govern'd by Masters, Wardens and Assistants in the nature of Commissioners and Viewers as in the Bill, which is yet far above it for Corporations may and do favour one and the other in viewing; but in this Method there cannot well be more favour shew'd to one then another; for the Commissioners sitting in London will be a present redress to any Complaint of that or any other kind made against their under Officers, besides they sitting constantly will upon all Occasions consult with Workers, Clothiers and Merchants to put in Practice any new Invention of improving the Manufactures, or gaining any New Markets abroad, and represent things to the Parliament.

2. Number of Officers is not the grievance of the Aulnage, but the abusive manner of Collecting that Duty which is methodiz'd in this Bill, so as that Mischief can never happen but the Manufacture plainly decays without some to see it truly perform'd, then if no less troublesome way than this can be devised, where the Benefit so far exceeds the Inconvenience, Commissioners, &c. under their Circumstances can hardly become a grievance, or no good must be attempted for fear of a possibility of failing, and the charge or trouble shall be no greater to the Subjects, be the number of Officers more or less. Besides the Dutcheffs of Richmond and the Farmers will be better secur'd by this Bill to receive what the Parliament does allow them instead of their Interest in the Aulnage, then they can be if the Duty were paid at the Custom-house.

3. Merchants may still for all this continue to order what Cloths they please from the Clothiers, the Commissioners will not hinder that only the Seals will shew which are best, indifferent, worst Cloths, as those of Colchester now do to their Bays, that the Buyer may still know what he buys, which giving a Standard of Credit, makes Seals very necessary, and thereby each Market will be pleas'd and well serv'd, and 'tis likely his Majesty will appoint some of the most knowing

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3. If any Fault be committed by the Work-man, he is to pay for that Fault, which no Statute has yet provided against.

4. The buyer is hereby assured what he buys shall answer his expectation; Why not this assurance be given to all Woollen Manufactures as well as in those places that do it by acts of Regulation, as Col-

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4. Transportation of Wooll can never be prevented, unless by the care of such Commissioners, drawn insensibly through its natural Chanel of Woollen Manufactures, which the clearing of the way by giving them a reputation at the Markets abroad can only effect.

5. If

5. If this regulation rectify the abuses in our Manufactures, 'twill be the greatest Incouragement to Trade, and the Officers highly deserve their Sallaries. Let not the greatest benefit be deny'd to the whole Kingdom, because some imperfection and inconvenience must be in any, tho' the best of Human Management, let none so despair of the Good of the Common-weal as to object, that this were an excellent method if there could be found Seven Honest Men in the Nation fit to be cheif Commissioners to direct this great Affair right.

Upon the whole Matter, if this regulation should have no better success then that at *Colchester*, Landlords, Spinners, Weavers, Fullers, Cloth-workers, Dyers, Drapers, Retailers and Merchants will each find a vast advantage in the quick vent, and at a good price of the Woollen Manufactures as will be evident, since there are Certificates ready to be offer'd at the Committee, under the hands of several hundreds of Clothiers, that the Methods in the Bill of four views and Commissioners will in all probability not only regain; but bring the Clothing Trade to the greatest perfection, and therefore they impatiently attend the happy issue of it. A benefit to be at this time more especially endeavor'd, when Tennants and under Workers are Beggard for want of Work at home. Merchants great loosers at Sea, and not daring to venture through so many hazards during this War in any Traffick that depends on remoter Parts. Yet by three Men of War attending between *England* and *Holland*, Trade would be secure thither to *Germany* and all the Northern Parts where Woollen Manufactures are of most use, and where they'l gladly exchange Pitch, Tar, Deals, Cordage, Masts, &c. for Cloths fitted to keep out the cold, their long Winters brings them, in which and other gains by such a Method, this Kingdom would be vastly enrich'd, 'twould raise Wooll to the ancient price at least as many hundreds of knowing Clothiers affirm, enabling Tennants not only to pay their Rents, but also render the present Tax much easier to be levyed. Perhaps some Drapers or Merchants of Cloth may oppose the Bill, but it can be only for this or the like reason, they had rather go on to strain Cloth and the like deceits which renders it unserviceable to the Buyer, because they get unreasonably thereby, not well considering those Arts by degrees bring the Commodity generally into disesteem, and racks Mens inventions for new sorts, Buyers always seeking if any can be had more serviceable when in reality by the Credit, and therefore general usage

of Cloths, tho' there be but a reasonable gain upon each Peice; yet at the Years end the frequent repetition of that small profit, and constant continuance of it will in few Years bring vast secure Riches, when the other unreasonable present gain upon using the Cloth by discovery of its faults determines, and often stops the further Sale of his Goods, who has then great quantities left to decay upon his hands, who thought sure to make an Estate quickly by them. The Growers or Owners of Wooll, may now think it there advantage, that Cloths should be slight and wear out fast to consume Wooll, not considering the multiplicity of uses, the Commodity will be imploy'd to, if 'tis truly wrote in its kind is a surer way, and will by a dayly Progression of wearing Cloth in other Countries, and upon many more occasions undoubtedly consume much more Wooll. When on the other hand the slighthness of Cloths is the chief reason the People have disus'd them in many places and occasions though to be had at home, for other sorts of Foreign Stuffs which answered expectation better or were expected to do so, and by which other Countries were put by our default upon making for their own use, 'tis this by little and little has made our dependance on Foreign Nations almost necessary and unavoidable, while we let them rob us of our native Riches, and sinews of War. Unless we now regulate better, and correct those faults which have sunk the reputation of our Manufactures. Let the Gentlemen most concern'd for the Exportation of Wooll Unmanufactur'd be forewarn'd of this, it may happen tho' other Nations yet but Novices in the Manufacturing of Cloth, are oblig'd at present to take off our Wooll to help them easily to do it. Yet when Labour and Industry has render'd them more expert in the nicest Parts of Workmanship, they may by several experiments either find out a way to Work as good Cloth by a mixture of their own Wooll and *Spanish*, or at least with some other Wooll then *English* or *Irish*, and then even their now pretious liberty of Exporting our Wooll, and the Clothing Trade will together expire amongst us.

When 'tis most evident if Cloth were wrought up to perfection, Wooll would go in more abundance and faster out through that its natural Channel, and bare as good if not better price then the Gentlemen now gets, who suffers it to be Exported, and other Nations would thereby be stopt in their too reasonable hopes, as things now stand of gaining that most beneficial Staple Trade from us.

All these Reasons are humbly submitted to the Consideration of the House, and its humbly desired, that if any Objections arise upon the Debate, they may be allow'd to offer Satisfactory Answers.

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